

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1489

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARISIS PRIORITY

USUN NEW YORK 168

AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI

S E C R E T SANA 2229

STADIS//////////

FROM DJIBOUTI CONSUL GENERAL CLARKE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, US, FT

SUBJECT: USN SHIP VISITS - DJIBOUTI

REFERENCE: STATE 134995 (NOTAL)

1.MATTER OF USN SHIP VISITS DJIBOUTI RELATES DIRECTLY TO
DECISION WHETHER USG WISHES PLAY ACTIVE OR PASSIVE ROLE IN
DJIBOUTI FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE. AN ACTIVE ROLE IMPLIES SOME
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, FORCEFUL SUPPORT OF DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE
ON DIPLOMATIC LEVEL AND RISK OF DRAWING SOME PLITICAL HEAT
ON FRAGILE DJIBOUTI FROM NEIGHBORS AND MORE RADICAL STATES
IN OAU AND ARAB LEAGUE.A PASSIVE POLICY CALLS FOR
MAINTNENACE LOW SILHOUTTE BY USG, LEAVING MAJOR DIPLO-
MATIC AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE SUPPORT TO FRIENDLY
MODERATE STATES OF REGION, KEEPING IN MIND THAT THIS
MAY IMPLY AN "ARABIZATION" OF A COUNTRY WHICH HAS LITTLE
HISOTRICAL CAUSE FOR READY ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH ENTREATIES.

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2. CERTAIN EXTERNAL POLITICAL PHENOMENA MAKE AN ACTIVE
POLICY MORE ATTRACTIVE AT PRESENT. BOTH U.S. AND
EHTIOPIA FAVOR AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI AND MAINTENANCE
OF RAILWAY. SOMALIA APPARENTLY HAS ACCEDED AT LEAST O
MAINTENANCE DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE AND HOPEFULLY COULD
BE PERSUADED OF IMPORTANCE OF RAILWAY TO DJIBOUTI BOTH

ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY. USN SHIP VISITS WOULD BE FORCEFUL INDICATION US SUPPORT. HOWEVER, BEFORE GOING TO DUSCUSS MATTER OF VISITS WITH PRESIDENT GOULED, WE SHOULD MAKE UP OUR OWN MINDS WHAT DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES WE ARE WILLING TO BRING TO BEAR IF SUCH VISITS ARE APPROVED.

3. IN MY DISCUSSIONS OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD DJIBOUTI AFTER INDEPENDENCE WITH PRESIDENT GOULED AND PRINCIPAL MINISTERS I HAVE TAKEN MORE OR LESS A MIDDLE GROUND: THAT U.S. STRONGLY SUPPORTS DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE, WILL OFFER DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE AND WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH SOME USEFUL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OR PROGRAMS. I HAVE ALSO TOLD THEM THAT U.S. REALIZES THE DELICATE DIPLOMATIC POSITION OF INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI, AND THAT WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT AVOID BIG POWER CONFRONTATION OVER DJIBOUTI. THESE COMMENTS HAVE INVARIABLY EVOKED VERY POSITIVE RESPONSES FROM MY INTERLOCUTORS. HOWEVER, I ASK MYSELF HONESTLY WHETHER SUCH AN IMPLICITLY CIRCUMSPECT POLICY IS REALIZABLE IN THE MEDIUM TERM.

4. NOT BEING PRIVY TO CONTENT DEPARTMENT'S LATEST THOUGHTS ON POLITICS OF HORN, I CAN ONLY OFFER WORM'S EYE VIEW OF BUCKET OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI. AS I SEE IT, DJIBOUTI REPRESENTS A KEY THORN IN SIDE OF CURRENT SOVIET EFFORTS TO CONTROL BOTH SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN EVENTS. DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE PRESERVES THIS THOR, AND IT IS THE THEORY IN SOME FRENCH CIRCLES IN DJIBOUTI AND PARIS THAT CURRENT
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SOVIET POLICY TOWARD DJIBOUTI IS TO DIVIDE IT IN TWO, WITH SUBSTANTIAL AFAR TERRITUORY NORTH AND WEST OF GULF OF TADJOURAH GOING TO ETHIOPIA AND ISSA ZONE SOUTH OF GULF (INCLUDING DJIBOUTI) TO SOMALIA. PRESUMEDLY SUCH A GAME PLAN WOULD INVOLVE SOME GUARANTEES FOR CONTINUED ETHIOPIAN ACCESS TO PORT. TAKING A VERY COLD LOOK AT SITUATION, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE IS VERY MUCH IN U.S. INTERESTS IF AONLY BECAUSE IT PREVENTS SOVIETS FROM RATIONALIZING ITS CURRENT HORN DILEMMAS.

5. TO RETURN TO THE ISSUE OF SHIP VISITS, MY INCLINATION IS TO SUPPORT SUCH VISITS AND, IN FACT, I SEE NO PROBLEM IN AUTHORIZING DAY TIME RPT DAY TIME SHORE LIBERTY FOR CREWS. AS DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE, THERE IS CURRENTLY NO PLAN FOR FORMATION DJIBOUTI NAVY. FRENCH FLEET WILL REMAIN FOR SOME TIME (EVEN REMOVAL SUBSTANTIAL FRENCH GROUND FORCES WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PROVIDE FOR CONTINUATIONNAVY AND AIR SUPPORT). FRENCH

NAVAL COMMANDER TOLD COMMANDER USS TRIPPE DURING VISIT
DJIBOUTI THAT MATERIEL AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO
US NAVAL VESSELS WOULD CONTINUE AVAILABLE AFTER
INDEPENDENCE ALTHOUGH HE WOULD NOT PERSONALLY BE ABLE
TO ISSUE INVITATIONS IN NAME OF DJIBOUTI "NAVY".

6. ASSUMING THAT WE WILL NOT TAKE TOTALLY PASSIVE ROLE
IN DJIBOUTI SCENE AFTER INDEPENDENCE, I SUPPORT CON-
TINUED VISITS AND HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO VISITS LISTED
REFTEL. HOWEVER, THE MATTER MUST BE DISCUSSED WITH
PRESIDENT GOUQED AND I WOULD LIKE TO BE SO AUTHORIZED.
GOULED HAS THREE OPTIONS: EITHER STRAIGHT YES OR NO
FOR REASONS DISCUSSED ABOVE, OR TO STATE THAT NEUTRAL-
ITY OF HIS COUNTRY REQUIRES THAT EQUAL FACILITIES OF
REFUELING, ETC., BE ACCORDED THE RUSSIAN NAVY. I
HONESTLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT HIS REACTION WILL BE (AND I
WOULD CERTAINLY FIND SOME WAY TO ARGUE AGAINST OPTION
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THREE), BUT IT WILL BE BOTH INTERESTING AND USEFUL TO
ASK.
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